

For Immediate Release

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Independent Candidate for Mayor of Rockford Kicks off Campaign

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Rockford: Local businessman, Derrick Kunz, has kicked off his campaign for Mayor of Rockford. The Consolidated General Election will be held on April 1, 2025. Kunz filed 796 signatures from Rockford citizens asking that Derrick Kunz's name be on the ballot. He collected over 1,200 signatures but submitted the maximum allowable. Kunz has since established his campaign committee, Citizens for Derrick Kunz, and has filed the appropriate documents with the Illinois State Board of Elections.

Statement from Independent Candidate for Mayor Derrick Kunz

I am running for Mayor because I think I can make a difference and provide leadership that is sorely needed. The incumbent is running for a third term and this time he will have a competitive race, and the citizens of Rockford will have a choice. I am a firm believer in the democratic process and Mayors should not be unopposed in elections which was the case in 2021.

In 2017 over 22,000 voters cast their ballots for a 25.58% turnout. In the 2021 election a little over 8,000 voters cast a ballot for 11.17% turnout and the incumbent was unopposed. When independent candidate Larry Morrissey ran his successful campaign for Mayor in 2005 over 33,000 voters went to the polls representing nearly 40% of the voters. Voters need to be engaged and more should be encouraged to participate in local elections.

I also believe that voters should be made aware of the issues and where the candidates stand on the issues as well as what their vision is for Rockford. I am engaging in an aggressive fundraising and grassroots campaign that will pay for the mail and the television ads that will inform the voters, and I will provide volunteers with literature that they can pass along to their neighbors.

It is my hope that the media and civic organizations in Rockford provide platforms for candidate forums and town hall meetings to discuss the issues and give voters an opportunity to hear and meet the candidates. It is my hope that the current Mayor embraces opportunities to meet his constituents.

Throughout the campaign voters will learn more about me and what my vision for Rockford. There are a number of issues that helped make my decision to run for this office easier along with an overwhelming level of support from citizens as I collected signatures and sought guidance. Amongst the issues that I will address:

- 1) Our school system and our tragic graduation rates need to be addressed. It is a priority because the condition of the schools affects public safety, economic development, and the lives of the children who are falling through the cracks. I will use the bully pulpit of the mayor's office to

bring this issue front and center and rally the community around finding solutions rather than remaining in silos.

2) I think Rockford voters need a referendum on the ballot that proposes elimination of partisan elections for city offices. Those who represent us on local issues should be non-partisan and focused on making our city safer, more affordable, and a place where businesses and people want to locate. Rockford has a declining population. There is too much precious time being wasted on “Sanctuary” status versus “welcoming” or other issues that have nothing to do with the city of Rockford. Focus needs to be on the issues that unite us not the ones that divide us.

3) The city of Rockford needs to embark on a strong economic development effort that will help us retain the jobs and businesses that currently exist as well as diversifying and bolstering our economy. A business-friendly environment at city hall will go a long way toward creating a climate for economic development. Our city should be partnering with new businesses and expansion of existing businesses by making sure that our permitting process is more proactive rather than reactive.

4) Property taxes in Rockford have been historically high and maintaining the status quo does not address affordability. We need a top to bottom audit of the way we are spending tax dollars so that we can address this critical issue.

In the coming months voters will hear much more from me but for now we will enjoy our families and friends throughout the holidays and look forward to a New Year and a new era for Rockford.

Derrick Kunz is a lifelong resident of Rockford and a Real Estate professional. He is married with two young children. For more information go to: www.kunzformayor.com

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Paid for by Citizens for Derrick Kunz